

**CHARTER ON THE RECOGNITION OF TRADE UNION AND EMPLOYEE  
REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE**

**BETWEEN THE UNDERSIGNED :**

**Jean-Pierre CLAMADIEU**  
CEO & Chairman of the Comex

AND

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EWC Coordinator

**Brussels, 28 February 2018**

## **Charter on recognition of employee representative skills in Solvay**

The signatories of this charter consider social dialogue to be one of the drivers behind the Group's economic performance, and an integral part of how the company operates and transforms itself.

Therefore, the employee representative's role, whether it be meetings with management, negotiation meetings or outreach meetings with employees, must be viewed as a standard business activity. The skills that are developed and applied by employee representatives should therefore receive the same recognition as would be the case for business activities. Recognition of employee representation supplements the recognition of the business roles performed by employee representatives.

On the basis of initiatives that have already been introduced in some countries, Solvay management and the European Works Council have drawn up this Charter, which should be considered to be an agreement between the parties. The charter aims to set out the guiding principles that will then be rolled out and applied at national level in all European countries represented at the EWC.

This recognition should help to enhance social dialogue and encourage staff engagement in employee representation activities.

The present Charter therefore aims to respond to these objectives and expectations to encourage and facilitate access to trade union or elective mandates.



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## **Article 1 – Subject and scope of the charter**

The signatory parties underline the innovative nature of the measures laid down by the present Charter, the aim of which is to set a process which not only guarantees equal treatment amongst all employees, whether they possess a representative mandate or not, but which additionally recognises skills acquired in the exercising of mandates for trade unions or works councils.

This Charter aims to benefit elected works council members or trade union representatives and to encourage and facilitate access to trade union or elective mandates. To reach this aim the signatory parties agree on establishing methodological elements in each country in order to:

- Identify the skills used to exercise the mandates;
- Evaluate the degree to which mandate holders have command of such skills. Therefore mandate holders should participate in the evaluation of their skills on a voluntary basis;
- Recognise and accredit the skills acquired and implemented in the exercising of such mandates within the framework of professional development.

This procedure can be applied during the course of the mandate, as well as upon expiration of the mandate.

The charter allows the development of trade union and representative skills, and to maintain professional employability, as well as to ensure the integration of trade union and representative experience into its professional development strategy.

## **Article 2 – Mandates within the scope of this Charter**

The signatory parties are aware of the fact that Solvay is active in many European countries with different structures of social dialogue and employee representation. Therefore this Charter only provides a framework.

Each country represented on the EWC will adapt this overall framework to fit that country's needs. A national joint working group will have the responsibility for identifying the mandate within the scope of each national agreement.

This process will apply initially to employee representatives who spend most of their time on union/employee representative duties. Each working group will define the amount of time spent. As a second step, other mandates will be progressively considered by a date specified by the working group in each country.

## **Article 3 – Composition and role of working group**

A joint working group at national level should be set up in each country and will be composed of:

- a defined number of union and/or works council representatives
- a defined number of representatives of management. The management should not be in the majority
- and possibly a representative from the external specialized provider (appointed by both parties) in order to assist the working group.

The Solvay Industrial Relations Officer is in charge of implementing this working group in each country.

The joint working group's primary role is to identify the mandates in question and to draft, for each of the mandates:

- an information sheet outlining the purposes, tasks and activities of these mandates
- a framework for the skills corresponding to each mandate
- a form to be used to evaluate the degree to which the representatives involved in the process have command of such skills.

**Article 4 – Support from a specialised provider to assist the parties in developing frameworks for the skills relative to the mandates and support for evaluation of the representatives**

At national level, the joint working group may, if necessary, consult a specialised provider to assist:

- in the identification of the mandates
- in developing frameworks outlining the skills to be observed for each of the mandates
- in providing support for the individual skill evaluations.


The joint working group has to agree on the appointment of the external provider.

Solvay will cover all the costs of provision of such services.

**Article 5 – Individual evaluation of employee representatives**

**Article 5.1 – Procedures relating to persons involved in the evaluation process**

The employee representative can request that he/she is evaluated and shall be informed prior to the evaluation of the list of skills on which he or she will be evaluated. The set of skills is outlined by the National working group related to the specific role of the individual.



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Each specific role may require different skills. All participation by the employee representatives in this scheme is voluntary.

The individual evaluation is conducted by the Solvay management representative and the works council or union representative, the objective of which is to reach an agreed observation between the evaluators.

The management team shall choose the Solvay representatives according to the following criteria:

- The Solvay representative shall not be in the same direct reporting line as the employee representative.
- The Solvay representative shall be capable of concretely evaluating the skills exercised, in light of the knowledge that he/she has acquired of the situations that the mandate requires the relevant representative to be involved in.
- The local or national nature of the mandate to be evaluated shall be taken into account when choosing the Solvay representative.

The Works council or union representatives shall be chosen according to the following criteria:

- They shall be appointed by the Works council or trade union to which they belong.
- They shall be capable of concretely evaluating the skills exercised, in the light of the knowledge that he/she has acquired of the situations that the mandate requires the relevant representative to be involved in.

## **Article 5.2 – Evaluation procedures**

For each skill, the factors to be observed shall be specified, for which the joint working group has agreed on defined evaluation levels. These may e.g. be:

- in progress
- fully proficient
- able to pass on skills

## **Article 6 – Procedures for recognising skills within the framework of professional development**

The recognition and accreditation process, not only upon expiration of the mandates, but also whilst said mandates are being exercised, shall be carried out according to the HR management principles applicable to all Solvay employees.

In doing so:

- To be recognised and accredited within the framework of professional development, a skill must be effectively put into action
- Skills shall be accredited using the procedures and tools used to determine the grading of positions at Solvay. The framework for skills outlined at national level, as well as the evaluation forms, aim to serve as a support for "scoring" each mandate, following the method in force for classifying positions at Solvay. These documents constitute a support for the management of career development for representatives. Conversion of the grading system at the local level will be explained by the Solvay Management.



## **Article 7 – Timeline and implementation procedures**

Procedures for implementation shall be specified nationally, in accordance with the legal and contractual requirements. They are subject to negotiation or consultation.

The practical provisions of the present Charter shall be defined in each European country before 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018. The frameworks at national level (Article 2) will then be added to this Charter in an appendix. The individual evaluation of employee representatives will be implemented after the national frameworks have been defined.

## **Article 8 – Charter duration**

This charter is valid for an indefinite period, from the date on which it is signed.

It may be revised at any moment by way of an amendment or terminated by either party, giving at least six months' notice.

## **Article 9 – Charter follow-up**

Solvay management shall present an assessment of the application of the present Charter at the annual meeting of the European Works Council. Every two years, the parties shall assess whether the charter needs to be revised.

Brussels, 28 February 2018.

For **Solvay SA**,



**Jean-Pierre Clamadieu**  
Chairman of the Executive  
Committee & CEO

For **European Works Council**,



**Albert Kruft**  
EWC Coordinator

*Note: The English version is the official copy for signature. This charter should be available in each language of the EWC representative.*